

WESTERN NEWS

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# City eyes demolishing buildings

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Western News Reporter

Libby officials are poised to obtain a court order that will allow for the demolition of five condemned buildings within the city limits.

Located at 412 Main Ave., 614 Dakota Ave., 110 and 110 1/2 Montana Ave. and 121 E. First St., the buildings are all owned by George and Annie Farag, formerly of Libby but now living in Spokane. The city notified the Farags that the buildings had been condemned and filed suit in district court this fall after the Farags failed to repair or demolish the structures.

The city's suit seeks permission to demolish the buildings and to recover costs from the owners. The Farags failed to respond within 20 days, allowing the city to obtain a default judgment in the case. City attorney Scott Spencer said he plans to appear in court next week to obtain an

order allowing the city to proceed with the demolition.

The city will consult the Environmental Protection Agency before tearing down the buildings, Spencer said. If a building contains asbestos-contaminated vermiculite insulation, EPA contractors will demolish the structure at no cost as part of the ongoing Superfund cleanup project. If a building is not contaminated, the city will have to do the work itself with city crews or hire a contractor for the job. In that case the city would seek to recover costs from the owners.

None of the buildings have been occupied for some time and all are in a state of considerable disrepair, Mayor Tony Berget said.

"It's a sad thing when we have to condemn a building, but they've really become unsafe for the community," he said. "They've become a hazard for the community."



The house at 614 Dakota Ave. is slated for demolition by the city along with other condemned buildings at 412 Main Ave., 110 and 110 1/2 Montana Ave. and 121 E. First St.